



Draft

Environmental Justice Issues at a Glance

November 1998

EPA Region 6 Establishes Environmental Justice Office

Region 6 has announced plans to centralize the Region's EJ Program under the direction of the Deputy Regional Administrator. The reorganization will establish a Region 6 Office of Environmental Justice staffed by a Director and approximately four full-time staff members that will focus entirely on EJ issues and coordinate with other regional programs. The Region 6 Environmental Justice (EJ) Program seeks to ensure that no segment of the population is disproportionately impacted as a result of the environmental decision-making process.

Calcasieu Parish Initiative

The EPA, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of Interior, the U. S. Forestry and Wildlife Services, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Forestry, have entered into negotiations with key industries in Calcasieu Parish to develop a Superfund Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study of the

Calcasieu Estuary.

Studies will be conducted to determine the scope and extent of the contamination, as well as possible remedies. As soon as an agreement is reached with potentially responsible parties, EPA will initiate extensive community involvement and outreach activities.

Region 6 established an internal Calcasieu Parish Multimedia Team in the Summer of 1998; the Team meets on a regular basis for coordination and to identify and develop strategies to respond to Calcasieu issues. EPA has committed to meet with citizen groups in Calcasieu Parish at least four times during the next year. The Team has coordinated the development of comprehensive responses that were compiled and provided to Parish residents in two citizens meetings held recently with EPA Deputy Regional Administrator, Jerry Clifford, and other Region 6 managers and staff.

EPA IS MONITORING AIR QUALITY IN CALCASIEU PARISH



UVDOAS Emitter aligned to project UV light to Receiver.
Emitter (pictured) and Receiver are aligned along south
shoulder of Sulphur Avenue to the north of Conoco.

The Calcasieu Basin Enforcement Initiative is a multimedia enforcement effort to promote regulatory compliance by facilities in the Calcasieu River Basin

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and mitigate releases which may impact human health and the environment in the Basin.

Thirty five facilities were targeted for inspection in the Calcasieu Basin area. Of the 35, 16, were inspected in Fiscal Year 98. Of the 16 facilities, 3 were subject to multi-media inspections. No violations were found at the three facilities.

MINORITY WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM AND BROWNFIELDS SHOWCASE COMMUNITY TRAINING GRANTS

One of the EPA's goals in the Superfund program is to return remediated hazardous waste sites and Brownfields sites to productive use in the community. EPA wants to involve community residents in these processes, providing opportunities for local residents to learn new skills which they can use in the community. Through the Superfund Minority Worker Training Program and the Brownfields Showcase Community Training Grants Program, EPA is providing training opportunities for residents living near Superfund hazardous waste sites and Brownfields sites.

The Minority Worker Training Program and Brownfields Showcase Community Training Grants project have two main goals:

- to work in partnership with unions via apprenticeship programs, local community-based organizations, and local academic institutions to implement a comprehensive education and job training program that will address clean-up and redevelopment in the target areas; and,
- to assist the local community colleges and Historical Black Colleges and Universities in promoting worker health and safety through education and training delivered by these academic institutions.

The EPA expects these two programs will create long-term benefits in these communities. Not only will the sites be cleaned, but participants in the Brownfields Showcase Community Training Grant Program and the Minority Worker Training Program will have gained skills which can provide income and benefits to the community for many years to come.

Minority Worker Training Grants

The National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), in partnership with EPA, awarded funding under two cooperative agreements to Xavier University in New Orleans, as a subgrantee for Clark Atlanta University, for the development and

implementation of two Minority Worker Training Programs.

These training programs were established to provide a series of pilot programs that will test a range of strategies for recruiting and training of persons who live near hazardous waste sites or in the community at risk of exposure to contaminated properties, for work in the environmental field. One project will target a Brownfields Showcase Community in Dallas, Texas. The other project targets minority worker training programs at two EPA Superfund sites: the RSR Smelter site in Dallas, Texas and the Agriculture Street Landfill site in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Last spring at the **RSR Smelter** site, nine students completed the 80 hour HAZMAT training conducted through the assistance of the AGC/Laborers Organization. The EPA hopes that the students will be selected for employment during some phase of the remediation.

At the **Agriculture Street Landfill** site, neighborhood residents completed the Minority Worker Training Program at Xavier University. In late November 1998, the Resident Services Coordinator, Dennis Alexander, was recognized by Louisiana State Representative Naomi E. Farve and the Desire Community for his instrumental role in the training and hiring of 15 "young people" from the community at the EPA's Agriculture Street Landfill Superfund Site. The Agriculture Street Landfill site is an EPA remediation of 95 acres of contaminated soil in a residential area of New Orleans, Louisiana.

EPA has retained the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for its construction expertise and IT is a contractor for USACE. IT's new employees have undergone a specialized training program to work as operators and technicians at contaminated sites such as Agriculture Street. Mr. Alexander is the Resident Services Coordinator for the project and is responsible for outreach efforts to the community. These efforts include: assisting residents with access agreements, explaining clean-up operations, and heading the after-hours hotline.



Mr. Dennis Alexander (white hat and center) with new community hires

Brownfields Showcase Community Training Grant

A Brownfields Showcase Community grant for \$220,572 is targeted for training residents living in the west Dallas Brownfields community. This program will implement an outreach and recruitment strategy to identify and train at least 15 participants each year, over a two-year period. Classes include study skills, life skills, math skills and HAZMAT training. Training also includes Brownfields related pre-apprenticeship technical training in construction and environmental remediation as well as job development and job placement.

In October 1998, a new, one-year \$150,000 grant targeted specifically for training 15 residents living near the RSR Smelter site was awarded to Xavier University-Clark Atlanta University. Classes include study skills, life skills, math skills, and HAZMAT training. Training also includes Brownfields related pre-apprenticeship technical training in construction and environmental remediation, as well as job development and job placement.

CITY OF LAREDO PROPOSAL FOR THREE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENTS Grant Award: \$75,000

Nearly half of all the households (46.2 percent) in Laredo have a mean annual income of less than \$16,404 per year. Laredo has a problem with general handling, storage, and proper disposal of household hazardous waste, placing additional and undue strain on the environment – especially, the municipal solid waste and water treatment facilities and exposes the residents in the community to hazardous materials.

The city's project will address the lack of awareness, the need for education, and the widespread apathy that are the three main roots of the problem. The project should result in a cleaner/safer environment with marked reductions in hazardous waste throughout the immediate environment.

The collection events are structured to encourage the entire community, with emphasis on environmental justice communities, to drop off hazardous waste and educate the citizens as to the importance of recycling and proper disposal of household hazardous waste. The multi-media approach will provide education, outreach, and technical assistance in pollution prevention to the community at large. This project's objectives are:

1. Reduce/prevent household hazardous waste from being improperly dumped into the sanitary stormwater sewer system;
2. Reduce accumulations of dangerous hazardous materials in households;
3. Reduce/eliminate potentially lethal household exposures and poisoning;
4. Education on proper handling, proper disposal, and recycling of household hazardous waste; and
5. Education on use of alternative, less toxic household products.

Acronyms Used

EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials

TEXAS PARTNERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The following are excerpts reprinted from the "Texas Partners for Environmental Justice" article written in the Winter 1998 edition of the Natural Outlook, a newsletter published by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC):

- The Charlton-Pollard community, a predominantly African-American neighborhood, is bordered by the Mobil Refining and Chemical Complex and other industrial facilities and the Port of Beaumont. It might easily have become another community embroiled in a highly publicized environmental justice case and interminable

political and legal wrangling with powerful corporate neighbors. Instead, residents and industry, led by Mobil, have become partners in improving the quality of life and educational opportunities in Charlton-Pollard.

- “Historically, the relationship hasn’t been as good as it is now,” said Ron Goodman, president of the 10-year old Charlton-Pollard Neighborhood Association. “There were poor communications. We put up with traffic and noise, and we didn’t know what was going on behind the gates of the neighboring facilities. “But once communications started up, attitudes changed,” he said. “Once we met, Mobil got a human face with us, and the community got a human face with the company.”
- Mobil recently revealed an innovative initiative, the Mobil-Charlton-Pollard Partnership Plan, that could become a national model for achieving environmental justice.
- “The Charlton-Pollard neighborhood was declining,” said Tom Moeller, manager of the Mobil Beaumont Refinery. “That concerned us because it is important to Mobil’s success that our neighbors and the entire city of Beaumont be successful. It’s important that there be good schools where kids graduate and that the neighborhoods are healthy, safe places to live. “We don’t hide behind our gate,” Moeller said. “We want people to understand our business and understand why it is important to the community for Mobil to be successful as well.”
- The Charlton-Pollard story illustrates the situation in which many industries that operate near residential neighborhoods find themselves. In a number of cases across the country, environmental justice (EJ) advocates have called for companies to address issues involving local communities.
- Both the White House and the EPA have called environmental justice a high priority. In the 1994, President Clinton issued an executive order, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” which requires that federal agencies make achieving environmental justice part of their mission.
- The EPA created an Office of Environmental Justice in 1992 and commissioned a task force to deal with environmental justice issues. The EPA also established and oversees a federal advisory committee, the

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC).

- In Beaumont, Mobil and residents clearly have good reason to collaborate. The Global energy corporation operates oil-refining and chemical-products divisions that employ 2,800 local people and contribute \$250 Million annually to the area’s economy.
- At a community meeting, Mobil refinery manager Moeller told the Charlton-Pollard neighborhood that his company needed to know how to help. “That meant the community has to make some decisions,” Moeller said. “Did they want the neighborhood to grow, to modernize, and to improve the school system? The neighborhood did some soul searching. They decided they wanted a safe neighborhood for children, where there were educational and work opportunities. Once the needs were defined, it was easier for us to help.” As a result of the Mobil Charlton-Pollard Partnership, Charlton-Pollard and Mobil already have a number of ongoing joint programs that include installation of additional air monitors, house-painting projects, scholarships to local Lamar University, summer jobs for high school students, and grants for reading and other educational initiatives in the public schools. “The way to develop the industry community relationship is to get a lot of people involved.” Moeller said. “Mobil has many people with skills and dollars who can help make positive things happen. We hope that everyone in the neighborhood will look at Mobil as a neighbor they can trust, so when there is an opportunity to make an improvement, they will consider coming to us for help.”

To obtain copies of the above article or Natural Outlook newsletter please contact Carlos Greth of TNRCC at (512) 239-0706 or mail your request to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission/ MC118, P.O. Box 13087 Austin, Texas 78711-3087.